**The Struggle for Independence in India**

**The Salt March**

Britain ruled in India from 1858 to 1947 but many Indian people were very unhappy with this and decided to try and end British rule.

Mohandas K. Gandhi believed that the only way to be successful against the powerful British Raj would be to engage many Indian people in a non-violent campaign.

On New Year’s Eve 1929 the Indian National Congress declared themselves ready to raise the tricolour flag of India and call for Purna Swaraj (complete self-rule).

After careful planning, led by Gandhi the Congress’s Working Committee decided to target the 1882 British Salt Act. This Act meant that only the British could collect and manufacture salt and when Indians bought salt they had to pay a salt tax to the British government.

Gandhi believed that he could unite Indians of all religious communities, castes and regions against British rule because salt was a basic and crucial dietary need that the British shouldn’t be making money out of at the expense of Indian people. He decided to encourage all Indians to defy the Salt Laws by manufacturing and selling salt themselves.

In order to gain publicity for the action and so get mass support from the Indian people Gandhi and the Working Committee planned to march 240 miles from Gandhi’s ashram in Ahmedabad to the coastal village of Dandi where he would publicly break the Salt Laws by collecting sea water and making salt from it. The long march would enable many people to learn about the action and thousands of people joined the Gandhi on the way. He stopped at many villages to talk about the Salt Laws, encouraging Indian officials to resign from their posts and ordinary people to boycott foreign cloth and spin their own cotton cloth.

The march was so dramatic that journalists from all over the world wrote about it.

On 5th April 1930, after 24 days of walking, Gandhi and his fellow marchers reached the shores of Dandi. The next morning Gandhi bent down and picked up a clump of mud and salt – symbolising a defiant breakage of the British Salt Laws. His action gave courage to millions of other Indians to break the Salt Laws by producing it themselves, buying it illegally and refusing to pay the tax.